

Today, Lane County District Attorney, Patty Perlow, issued a statement regarding the death of Charles F. Landeros.^[1] The DA's office found the shooting "legally justified as self-defense and defense of others." The statement notes that Charlie was asked to come to the school regarding a custody issue. Charlie was allegedly asked to leave the school after refusing to answer further questions by the officers. Charlie cooperated with leaving the office. Outside of the office, Charlie protested that the principal had not expressed a desire to remove them. After this, the video released by the DA's office shows Charlie moving toward the exit-doors, when Charlie's child, according to the report, "arrived in the hallway by coincidence." Charlie appears to be trying to get their child's attention, while moving towards the doors to exit. Officer Steve Timm, a school resource officer for the Bethel School moves aggressively toward Charlie, shoving Charlie through the door and then against a wall outside. The DA's office disputes that Charlie was moving toward the door to exit. What we know after this point, comes from the badge-cam video of Officer Timm and Officer Aaron Johns.

We know that issues involving a person's child are already tense and delicate situations with the potential to escalate. We also know that people of color are disproportionately the victims of police violence. We know that Charlie, as an activist against police brutality and a descendant of Mexican and Filipino parents, was aware of this. We do not know, however, what was going through Charlie's mind when they were shoved out of the door in front of their child and pinned to the wall. We also do not know why Officer Timms felt the need to aggressively shove Charlie through the door and against the wall as Charlie appears to exit the school.

The investigation by the Interagency Deadly Force Investigation Team is not complete and Charlie's family will be retaining police practices experts to conduct an independent investigation to review the use of deadly force that resulted in the tragic death of their loved one. We know this is a complex situation and that these situations often involve split-second decisions that are not fully appreciated simply by watching a video. We also recognize that context matters. Charlie was a beloved figure in the Eugene community and was known for their electric speeches and organizing around social, economic, and racial justice. Regarding the DA's statement today, Charlie's younger brother, Joe could only say: "My love for Charlie is forever. I just want them back. This never should have happened."

After the DA's statement, Charlie's partner, Ariel, said: "I understand, with more clarity than ever before, why Charlie planted seeds, why they loved teaching, and how they drew beauty and community close around them. Charlie's body is gone, but even in death, they are present—encouraging us to keep fighting for a better world and believe in our own power."

The video released today, and the accompanying statement from the DA's office do not change the fact that many in the community are still grieving and that Charlie's daughters are now without their father. We ask that people respect Charlie's family and community while they grieve over their tremendous and incomprehensible loss.

[1] Charles (“Charlie”) Landeros used they/them pronouns. Those pronouns will be used throughout this press release and we request, out of respect for the Landeros family, that others writing about Charlie use they/them pronouns when writing or speaking about Charlie.